

*The Pioneer*

**Local dad to bike 250 miles for a good cause**

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Rich Nee is getting ready for the ride of a lifetime.

An avid bicyclist, the Libertyville resident frequently rides the trails of Lake County on weekends during the warmer months. On Sept. 18, the 50-year-old Nee and his 21-year-old daughter, Julia, will take a three-day, 250-mile bike trek through New England to raise money for kidney disease awareness and testing.

Nee has been training for the ride for the last several months, often riding as much as 100 miles on a weekend on the Des Plaines River trail or other local trails. For Nee, the ride will be a great challenge and also benefits a good cause.

"It gives me a chance to ride long distance and spend time with others that are also interested in helping fight this disease," said Nee.

Nee is an employee of Lifeline Vascular Access in Vernon Hills, a division of DaVita Inc., a leading provider of kidney care services, which is sponsoring the bike ride to benefit the Kidney Trust. Hundreds of DaVita employees, friends and family throughout the country will participate in the ride, which is expected to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for the cause. The Kidney Trust is a non-profit organization that aims to benefit the 31 million American adults living with Chronic Kidney Disease and to raise awareness of kidney disease through public education and screening.

Nee said he knows people that are on kidney dialysis because of kidney disease so it's a significant problem.

"There are 350,000 people in this country that don't have kidney function or are on dialysis," said Nee. "It's more common than you'd think."

The 250-mile bike ride will kick off in the mountains of Barrington, Mass., and end at the Atlantic Ocean in Madison, Conn. Cyclists will ride 75 miles a day the first two days and 100 miles on the final day.

Nee participated in a similar distance ride in Michigan two years ago but this will be the first time he has done the ride with his daughter.

"I'm really excited about it. She's off at school so she doesn't get home that often. To have three days together is really special," he said.

Julia Nee, a former Libertyville High School graduate, who now attends the University of Chicago, said she too is looking forward to participating in the ride with her father.

"This is a new thing for me," she said. "I enjoy biking but I've never been on a long distance ride like this before so I think it's going to be a challenge. It's for a good cause so I think that's good motivation too.

"I'm excited to be doing it with dad. He's a really avid rider and it's a good way to spend some time together."